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Hercowitz-Amir, Adi ; Raijman, Rebeca ; Davidov, Eldad

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**Host or hostile? Attitudes towards asylum seekers in Israel and in Denmark**

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### **Abstract**

In this study we focus on attitudes to asylum seekers in two countries: Denmark and Israel. Both serve as interesting cases through which to study public sentiment of host populations for people seeking refuge. We examine the role of three core dimensions that have been relatively overlooked in previous studies: social contact with asylum seekers, the role of support for humanitarian policies, and perceptions of legitimacy of the asylum seekers' claims. We also gauge the way perceptions of threat mediate the effect of these core dimensions on individuals' willingness to share their national benefits with those looking for refugee status in the two countries. For the analysis we use multiple group structural equation modeling. On the descriptive level, findings suggest that respondents are considerably more hostile in Israel than in Denmark, although the mechanisms leading to the formation of exclusionary attitudes are partly similar. We conclude with some limitations of the study and closing remarks about similarities and differences across the two countries.

## Introduction

In recent years, the rise in the number of asylum seekers reaching industrialized countries has increased as a result of armed conflict, civil unrest, and security concerns. Images of asylum seekers arriving by land or sea in countries in southern Europe, Australia and southern Asia overcrowd the news media and give rise to fierce debates on the political and public opinion level alike in many destination countries (Gibney, 2004; Lewis, 2005; McKay et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2004). Several studies show that the attitude of the general public has often been hostile to asylum seekers, favouring exclusionary policies including detention and deportation (Haslam and Pedersen, 2007; Hochman, 2015; McKay et al., 2012).

Perhaps more than any other category of migrants, *asylum seekers* exacerbate the tension between the commitment of democratic nation-states to humanitarian principles and universal rights on the one hand, and the interests of national communities based on ties of common descent and ethnicity on the other (Statham, 2003; Heath and Ford, 2016). Right-wing politicians and the general public tend to differentiate ‘genuine’, ‘deserving’ asylum seekers from ‘economic’, ‘undeserving’ asylum seekers. It is often argued that most newcomers are not in real danger in their home countries but migrated in search of economic opportunities. Therefore, they are frequently accused of making illegitimate claims and abusing the host-societies’ asylum system. Furthermore, natives often deem asylum seekers a threat to personal and national security, linking them to criminality, delinquency, and even terrorism, especially in the last decade (Bigo, 2002; D’Appolonia, 2012).

At the same time, receiving states and their populations face the challenge of upholding the moral principles of humanitarianism, which requires them to shoulder universal responsibility to protect persons at great risk and in flight from their countries of origin. While

countries seek an international reputation as being ‘humanitarian’ (Dauvergne, 1999), they agree to offer protection and assistance to forced migrants only when the *cost* of doing so is low (Every, 2008). On the individual level, beliefs that states’ policies should assume responsibility and protect asylum seekers, based on principles of philanthropy, universalism and egalitarianism (Gibney, 2004), have proved important determinants of tolerant attitudes to asylum seekers (e.g. Pantoja, 2006). An additional issue which is unique to the asylum phenomenon as compared with other immigrant situations is that countries are compelled to accept asylum seekers as required by international conventions. This may result in a negative host population reaction, emanating from a feeling that natives have no say on the entry of asylum seekers into the country.

This paper focuses on the underlying determinants of attitudes to granting rights to asylum seekers in Denmark and Israel. Both countries are interesting for the study of public sentiment about asylum seekers. They evince important similarities and differences in terms of admitting asylum seekers. Both are variants of industrialized democracies, characterized by deep politicization and securitization of the asylum phenomenon while also showing relatively low levels of asylum migration. But the two countries differ historically on asylum issues (short history in Israel as compared with Denmark’s post-World War history); also, Denmark must act in line with EU standards and principles<sup>1</sup> which tend to fortify human rights, while Israel is relatively autonomous in determining its (restrictionist) policy. Furthermore, each country represents different migration and welfare regimes, which some have singled out as important contextual factors explaining differences in attitudes to immigrants (Crepaz and Damron, 2009; Hjerm, 2007; Schlüter et al. 2013; Van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007).

We focus on the level of willingness of either country’s citizens to include and share their national benefits (financial support, the right to work, family reunification) with asylum seekers.

While a great number of studies corroborate that perceived threat is an important mechanism explaining exclusionary attitudes to immigrants (see e.g. McLaren, 2003; Quillian, 1995; Scheepers et al., 2002), the role of other factors is relatively overlooked. We aim at filling this gap by focusing on three *additional* core dimensions that are hypothesized to affect exclusionary attitudes to immigrants striving for refugee status in host societies: (1) perceptions of legitimacy of the asylum seekers' claims, (2) the role of support for humanitarian policy measures, and (3) social contact.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, we aim to contribute to the literature explaining attitudes of host populations to asylum seekers in a comparative perspective.

Next we present the comparative setting and discuss how differences in countries' structural characteristics may affect differences in levels of willingness to grant these rights. We review previous theories and research to formulate a comprehensive model of determinants of natives' attitudes to granting rights to asylum seekers, and of the mechanisms underlying these effects. Then we describe the data sets and test the cross-cultural equivalence of the measurement of our latent variables to guarantee that cross-country comparisons are meaningful. Thereafter we estimate a structural equation model to examine the effects of the individual-level explanatory variables (support for humanitarian policy, legitimacy of claims of asylum seekers, social contact, and perceptions of threat) on attitudes to granting rights to asylum seekers in Denmark and Israel. Finally, we discuss the findings in light of existing theories, and highlight some differences in the mechanisms underlying attitudes to granting rights to asylum seekers in the two countries.

### *The choice of Israel and Denmark: Comparing the two cases*

An overview of each of the country settings is offered first, followed by a comparison of the main similarities and differences between the two countries. We argue that in light of these similar and diverging attributes, both countries serve as highly interesting platforms for comparing public sentiments about asylum seekers; the focus on them imparts an added value to the discussion in the current era, when asylum hosting has become a global challenge faced by countries with diverse institutional setups.

#### *Israel*

Israel is an ethnic democracy (Smootha, 1997), where the *Law of Return* stands for its self-definition as a Jewish state. This law, enacted by the Knesset in 1950, is a state-constituting piece of legislation applicable to every Jew in the world, allowing each to settle in Israel and automatically receive citizenship, with no length of residency or language proficiency conditions. Due to the pivotal role of the Law of Return, immigration policy in Israel is exclusionary toward non-Jews as their presence challenges the ethno-national definition of the Israeli state (Raijman et al., 2008).

Until the 1990s immigrants to Israel were mostly of Jewish descent, entering the country under the Law of Return. But from the start of that decade Israel experienced new types of non-Jewish migration flows which led to the emergence of two new groups of non-citizens: first, labour migrants recruited to replace the non-citizen Palestinian workers from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip who were banned from entering Israel following the first Palestinian uprising; second, African asylum seekers entering Israel clandestinely across its border with Egypt, mainly since 2007. By mid-2016 approximately 41,000 asylum seekers resided in the country,

comprising 0.6 percent of the population. Most of them (92 percent) originate from Eritrea and Sudan (Population and Immigration Authority, 2016), countries with severe human rights violations, and are granted Temporary Group Protection (TGP) status.

In line with its long-standing ethno-national regime as well as the geopolitical circumstances of continuous security threats both internally and externally (tense relations with neighbouring countries), Israel adopts a highly exclusionary policy on its non-Jewish migrants in general and on asylum seekers in particular, denying them state support and refusing to consider them prospective members of society (Kritzman-Amir, 2015). The Israeli welfare system, which some classify as a liberal model (Gal, 2008) and others as a conservative variant (Monnickendam and Gordon, 2010), interfaces with its immigration regime and is also embedded in the logic of inclusion regarding citizens, preferably Jews, and exclusion of non-citizens. At the same time, it does not recognize asylum seekers as legitimate ‘clients’ of welfare programs and does not accord them social provisions and benefits (Rosenhek, 2000). Asylum seekers are denied welfare rights and social rights. De jure, they do not have the right to work in Israel. Under TGP, prior to 2013 Eritrean and Sudanese nationals were also not permitted to submit individual asylum applications and have their cases heard. Since then, some thousand asylum applications have been submitted, yet recognition rates remain extremely low at less than one percent (Kritzman-Amir, 2015). Thus, as opposed to other asylum host countries in which a substantial percentage of asylum seekers eventually become refugees following approval of their asylum application, in Israel asylum seekers remain continuously under a ‘liminal’ legal status.



## *Denmark*

Historically, until the mid-1980s Denmark implemented relatively liberal refugee policies. This resulted in a steady flow of asylum seekers over the years (Wren, 2001). Between 2008 and 2013, 28,926 persons applied for asylum in Denmark, accounting for 0.5 percent of the population. In this period asylum applicants mainly originated from Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Serbia, and the Russian Federation. Following the humanitarian crisis in Syria, Denmark experienced a sharp rise in the number of asylum seekers arriving at its borders in 2014 and 2015. Over 14,000 applications were submitted in 2014 alone (UNHCR, 2015), and an estimated all-time record of over 18,000 asylum applications was reached in 2015.<sup>3</sup> Recognition rates of asylum applications are relatively generous in Denmark, but they have undergone fluctuations over the years. Between 2007 and 2013 the recognition rate of asylum claims was 33-56 percent (The Danish Immigration Service, 2014).

The Danish immigration policy regime diverges widely from the Israeli regime. With a long history of being a homogeneous ‘tribe’ (Gundelach, 2001) which became a destination country for immigrants and asylum seekers at the end of the 1960s, Denmark exhibits itself as a much more welcoming and inclusive model for asylum seekers than Israel, despite the restrictionist direction Denmark took early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century consequent to right-wing mobilization on immigration and asylum issues.<sup>4</sup> Denmark does not actively encourage immigration, but as part of its global humanitarian ethos (Moore, 2010) it offers asylum seekers a real possibility to enter the country and eventually become members of the collective, depending on length of residence and other integration criteria. Denmark’s extensive social-democratic welfare regime grants social rights to all sectors of society and also caters to newcomers to the country. The all-embracing welfare system partially supports non-citizens such

as asylum seekers, although public debate constantly queries the high costs of maintaining such a safety net for the various migrant categories (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). This has been especially evident since the Syrian asylum seekers started arriving in the country in large numbers.

Asylum seekers enjoy a wide array of rights in Denmark, including a cash allowance, housing at accommodation centres, healthcare and educational benefits. After residing for a minimum of six months in the country, asylum seekers are granted access to the labour market, where the job offered to them must comply with Danish standard salary and employment terms. Once an asylum application is approved, Danish authorities assign a place of residence within the first three years in Denmark.

In sum, Israel and Denmark greatly differ in the reception that asylum seekers face, in terms of legal rights and institutionalization of asylum policy. In Israel they are a new feature, and the exclusionary policy is characterized as a ‘hands-off’ government approach, denying them access to state services and forestalling long-term settlement. In Denmark, even considering the country’s restrictive direction since the early 2000s, asylum seekers encounter a more developed and generous asylum model, and are entitled to a set of basic rights embedded in the social-democratic logic of universalism and equality.

As Table 1 shows, Denmark and Israel cannot be regarded as ‘completely different’ or ‘completely similar’ countries, as they share certain attributes and diverge on others. Both are small countries with a relatively low asylum migration flow compared with other host states, and are both signatories to the 1951 refugee convention. Likewise, asylum has been deeply politicized in both cases. Both countries have also voiced protectionist and nationalistic concerns in the past decade with regard to the asylum seekers’ ethnic ‘non-Western’ background, which is

claimed to jeopardize national homogeneity, as well as posing a challenge to ‘liberal’ cultural norms in Denmark (Valentine et al., 2009) and being a public security threat in Israel (Schneider, 2012; Wargoft, 2011). Lastly, both have implemented particularly controversial asylum policies in recent years (e.g., in Denmark confiscation of valuables and in Israel highly restrictionist detention policies); these measures drew international attention as a ‘race to the bottom’ attempt to restrict asylum seekers’ rights.

Table 1 about here

By contrast, the two countries differ greatly. First, Israel and Denmark represent two different types of welfare and immigration regimes. Both define the normative boundaries for inclusion and exclusion within society (Wright, 2011). Previous comparative studies have emphasized the relevance of welfare and immigration policy regimes to public views on immigrants’ entitlements in host societies (Hjerm, 2007). The more comprehensive the welfare state, the more tolerant the majority population of immigrants (Crepaz and Damron, 2009). This is due to the lowering of levels of selectivity and inequality, which influence opinions on immigrants’ *deservingness* of welfare benefits (Van Der Waal et al., 2013). Likewise, migration policy regimes have proved significant predictors of perceptions of threat and exclusionary attitudes to immigrants: the closer the immigration regime tends to an ethno-national model, emphasizing the nation’s cultural and ethnic homogeneity and applying more restrictive immigrant integration policies, the stronger will the majority population’s anti-immigrant attitudes be (Hjerm, 2007; Schlüter et al., 2013)

Denmark and Israel also diverge in other structural attributes such as their wealth distribution (Gini index) and economic performance (GDP), and in their geopolitical stance and history. These factors have been found directly or indirectly to affect the formation of attitudes to

and policy on out-groups seeking asylum (Billiet et al., 2016; Givens and Luedtke, 2005; Kuntz et al., 2017 in this volume for the case of immigrants).

In light of the differences and similarities between the countries, the comparison of Denmark and Israel is intriguing theoretically, as it will provide much on the dynamics and mechanisms at the heart of attitude formation and political construction of asylum policy. We claim that *differences* between the two countries in attitudes may well reinforce the robustness of structural attributes of societies in explaining host states' social attitudes to asylum seekers on the micro (citizen) level, beyond the single cases examined in this study; *similarities* between the two cases may indicate how certain attitude-formation dynamics are universal and cross different social and national contexts facing the same issue. So whether differences or similarities are found, the two countries together offer an intriguing and fruitful platform to examine contemporary host publics' attitudes to asylum seekers.

### *Theoretical background*

Several theories have been advanced to explain attitudes of majority populations to immigrants in general and asylum seekers and refugees in particular. We refer here to four main explanations: (1) perceptions of legitimacy of the asylum seekers' claims, (2) support for a humanitarian policy, (3) social contact, (4) perceptions of socio-economic and security threat.

### *Legitimacy of Claims: 'Genuine' Refugees?*

Public sentiment regarding asylum seekers is affected by the *perceived authenticity* of their claims, namely the extent natives perceive immigrants looking for asylum as vulnerable and in need of protection by the host country. Previous research suggests that asylum seekers are

usually classified in a binary way: legitimate refugees in need of protection, or ‘economic’ refugees taking advantage of the host country’s policies for their own economic or personal gain (Every and Augoustinos, 2007; Lewis, 2005). Research in the Netherlands reveals that individuals sharply distinguish ‘real’ refugees, *forced* to seek asylum (e.g., due to political persecution or wars), from migrants seen as deliberately *choosing* to seek asylum, their decision to migrate being mostly economically motivated. The former elicit sympathy, the latter anger and resentment associated with lack of support for pro-immigrant policies (Verkuyten, 2004).

In a study conducted in Israel, Hochman (2015) found that the ways a survey defined asylum seekers (‘asylum seekers’ or ‘infiltrators’) had important implications for respondents’ beliefs about how much support asylum seekers deserved or were entitled to. Respondents exposed to the negative ‘infiltrators’ frame were more likely to prefer a ‘closed border’ policy (preventing entry of asylum seekers altogether) than those exposed to the ‘asylum seekers’ frame. This is because some members of receiving societies feel that by making illegitimate claims about their circumstances, ‘economic’ refugees violate principles of justice and fairness in their efforts to receive asylum and refugee status. These perceptions of illegitimate and unjust claims result in feeling of threat, resentment, and exclusionary attitudes to asylum seekers (Esses et al., 2008).

#### *Support for a humanitarian policy on asylum seekers*

Humanitarianism has commonly been formalized as a duty of each and every individual to assist those in great distress or suffering (Gibney, 2004). It is a prosocial orientation (Feldman and Steenbergen-Marco, 2001) emphasizing willingness to help and implies an intrinsic connection and obligation with those outside one’s in-group (Oyamot et al., 2012). We define support for a

humanitarian policy as endorsement of the normative prescription whereby advantaged and prosperous nations should provide refugees and other vulnerable populations with shelter and protection (Katz and Hass, 1988; Louis et al., 2007) as well as access to their territory. This means that prosperous nations have a moral obligation to share some of their wealth with poor nations (Katz and Hass, 1988:905) and should be committed to help the less fortunate from other countries.

The social-psychology literature on attitudes to minority out-groups shows that individuals who endorse humanitarian policies display lower anti-immigrant sentiments (Emmenegger and Klemmensen, 2013; Leong and Ward, 2006; Oyamoto et al., 2012; Pantoja, 2006). This is because individuals with a humanitarian outlook tend to be more sympathetic to the needs of out-group populations and feel less threatened by policies aimed to improve their situation in the host society (Katz and Hass, 1988:905).

### *Social Contact Theory*

Several scholars also point out the relevance of inter-group contact to explain the source of exclusionary attitudes to out-group populations (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). According to the contact hypothesis, prior contact between the groups provides information about characteristics of the out-group, hence affects both perceptions of its threat and discriminatory attitudes to it (see e.g. Pettigrew, 1998; McLaren, 2003; Wagner et al., 2003). Furthermore, the quality of the contact may also affect the way threats are perceived (Stephan and Stephan, 2000). Positive or pleasant contacts should lead to improved inter-group relations, thereby reducing fear of competition, prejudice and social distance (Raijman, 2013). By contrast, the presence of out-group populations may arouse in people having no social interaction with them, or with negative

or unpleasant experiences of it, a feeling of threat, causing them to discriminate against the out-group.<sup>5</sup> Some argue that even when the contact is not positive, it at least helps to reduce uncertainty about the characteristics and behaviour of the other group (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Stephan and Stephan, 2000: 32).

### *Perceptions of Threat*

Researchers often single out perceptions of threat as one of the main predictors of discriminatory attitudes to out-group populations (Quillian, 1995; Raijman et al., 2003, 2008; Scheepers et al., 2002; Semyonov et al., 2006; Stephan and Stephan, 2000). Most scholars concur as to the complexity and the multidimensionality of this concept (see e.g. Canetti-Nisim et al., 2008). We differentiate two important sub-dimensions of threat: socio-economic and security.

Socio-economic threat posits that an individual's perception of group conflict or even the threat of group conflict stimulates anti-immigrant attitudes (Coenders, 2001; Quillian, 1995). The logic embodied in this framework suggests that individuals feel that out-group populations generate greater competition for scarce resources (e.g. jobs, wage rates, housing, social services) and this fear rationalizes exclusionary attitudes to out-group populations like asylum seekers (see e.g. Esses et al., 2001; McLaren, 2003; Quillian, 1995; Raijman et al., 2003; Scheepers et al., 2002).

In addition, several studies show that anxiety about personal and national security drives anti-immigrant sentiments in host societies (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2008; Fitzgerald et al., 2012). The rationalization underlying the perceived security threat stems from fear that members of an out-group population will become involved in actions that undermine the existence of the host-state or jeopardize its population, including criminal acts and terror attacks (Huddy et al., 2002).

Intense fear may induce antagonism to the out-group members, manifested in exclusionist attitudes to them. Thus, exclusionary attitudes to out-group populations may be rooted in threats of competition but also in threats to the very existence of the society. Although it may be interesting to disentangle the effects of these two dimensions of threat on the empirical level, sometimes they are so closely correlated that distinguishing the unique influences of either is empirically difficult because they tap into a single underlying dimension: threat (see e.g. Stephan et al. 1998: 570). Therefore here we refer to a general construct of threat deriving from socio-economic and security dimensions alike.

### **Theoretical Expectations**

The theoretical review and existing literature lead to a series of propositions on the determinants of attitudes to asylum seekers. To this end we follow the existing literature that provides support for our theoretical reasoning.<sup>6</sup> First, perceptions of threat and levels of disagreement with granting rights to asylum seekers are expected to be higher among respondents having negative contacts with asylum seekers, and those who tend to think that asylum seekers are not ‘genuine refugees’ (are not in real fear of persecution in their homelands). By contrast, individuals displaying greater support for a humanitarian policy and positive contacts are expected to display lower fear of threat and lesser exclusionary attitudes. Second, disagreement with granting rights to asylum seekers is expected to rise with the level of perceived threat. Third, ‘perceived threat’ will mediate part of the effect of the three exogenous variables (social contact, support for a humanitarian policy, perception of legitimacy of claims) on attitudes to asylum seekers (see Figure 1 for a portrayal of the expected relationships delineated so far).



Differences between Denmark and Israel relating to general structural aspects (e.g. welfare and migration regimes, GDP, GINI index, as well as to their asylum-hosting models—see Table 1) lead us to expect that the two countries diverge with respect to public views on asylum seekers (mean levels) but also with respect to the strength of the operating mechanisms driving anti-immigrant sentiment. Fourth, attitudes to granting rights to asylum seekers will be more negative in Israel and more positive in Denmark.

Fifth, we expect that the effects of *perceiving asylum seekers as not ‘genuine refugees’* and *support for a humanitarian policy* on perceptions of threat and disagreement to grant rights to asylum seekers will be stronger in Denmark than in Israel. Whereas Israel is more restrictive and negative toward all types of asylum seekers, the better protection of ‘genuine refugees’ in Denmark is expected to be acknowledged by host society members and to result in less negative attitudes to asylum seekers if they are perceived as ‘deserving’—i.e. as ‘genuine.’<sup>7</sup>

Finally, we also hypothesize that the effect of perceived threat on disagreement to grant rights to asylum seekers will be stronger in Israel than in Denmark. In the latter, as a social-democratic country, values of solidarity and equality are more strongly embedded. Consequently, we expect natives’ public positions on asylum seekers to be more inclusive there than in less comprehensive welfare states like Israel even in the presence of threat. Next, we move to the methodological and empirical sections to test our theoretical expectations.

## **Methodology**

The study is based on two public opinion polls carried out in Israel and Denmark.<sup>8</sup> In Israel the *UniSeker Survey Center* at the University of Haifa conducted the poll between June and August 2013 with a representative stratified sample of the Jewish adult population (N= 500). The Center

drew respondents at random from the Israeli telephone and cellular phone registry, applying proportional sampling across municipalities based on size. The interviews were by telephone with a response rate of about 60 percent. As this study measures attitudes of the majority population to asylum seekers, all the respondents were Jewish, 71 percent of them Israeli-born. In Denmark the Danish surveying company *Voxmeter* conducted the survey in September 2013, based on a representative sample of the Danish adult population (N= 500). Recruitment of respondents was via a web panel<sup>9</sup> and they answered to questions in an online survey. Response rate was 33 percent. The great majority of the respondents (98 percent) were Danish-born; the rest (2 percent) had Danish- or European-born parents. In Appendix 1 we display the socio-demographic characteristics of the two samples and compare them with the socio-economic characteristics of the general Danish and Israeli adult populations. As the data show, overall the sample's characteristics closely matched those of the general population in both countries, suggesting that in both cases the sample closely represents the population.

### *Variables*

The dependent variable **Disagreement to grant rights to asylum seekers (NO RIGHTS)** was gauged by three items concerning the allocation of goods to asylum seekers in three major policy domains (see e.g. Verkuyten, 2004): labor market, welfare benefits, and family reunification: (1) 'People applying for refugee status should be allowed to work while their cases are considered'; (2) 'Granted refugees should be entitled to bring close family members to Denmark/Israel'; (3) 'Financial support should be given to refugee applicants while their cases are considered'. Responses ranged from 1 = strongly agree to 7 = strongly disagree, so that higher scores indicated stronger disagreement to grant rights. Correlations between the three

items were from 0.50 and 0.51 for Denmark and from 0.30 to 0.36 for Israel. They were used in the data analysis to create a latent variable ‘NO RIGHTS’ (see Appendix 2 for correlation matrices of items). Standardized factor loadings were higher than 0.5 in both countries, demonstrating high reliability (Brown, 2015) (the standardized factor loadings are reported in Appendix 3).

**Perceiving the claims of asylum seekers as non-legitimate (NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES)** was measured by a single item tapping into respondents’ perceptions that most asylum seekers are not in real fear of persecution in their homeland: ‘Most applicants for refugee status aren’t in real fear of persecution in their own countries’. Responses ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

**SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY** was measured by the following two items: (1) ‘Richer countries have the responsibility to accept people from poorer countries’; (2) ‘Richer countries should not deport asylum seekers arriving from countries defined as “dangerous” by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)’. Responses ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The two items were used in the data analysis to measure a latent variable called ‘SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY’. The two questions correlated strongly (0.65 in Denmark; 0.57 in Israel: see Appendix 2). The standardized factor loadings were higher than 0.71 in both countries (see Appendix 3).<sup>10</sup>

**Social contact** was measured by two questions. First the respondent was asked if he or she had any kind of social contact with an asylum seeker on various acquaintance levels (close interaction at work or in the residential area, casual encounters on the street, etc.). If there was some kind of contact, the respondent was asked to evaluate his or her experiences on a 1-7 scale (1 = negative, 7 = positive). We computed a series of dummy variables (**POSITIVE**

**CONTACT** (5-7 on the scale), **NEGATIVE CONTACT** (1-4 on the scale), with no contact as the reference category).

**Perception of threat** was a latent variable reflecting perceptions of the consequences of the presence of asylum seekers. We measured two sub-dimensions: socio-economic threat and security threat. **SOCIO-ECONOMIC THREAT** was measured by responses to the following four statements: (1) ‘Asylum seekers pose a burden on the welfare services provided by the state’; (2) ‘Asylum seekers pose a burden on the education services provided by the state’; (3) ‘Asylum seekers take jobs away from Danes/Israelis’; and (4) ‘Asylum seekers reduce wage levels in Denmark/Israel’. The item correlations were high: from 0.53 to 0.85 in Denmark and from 0.48 to 0.68 in Israel (see Appendix 2). **SECURITY THREAT** was measured by responses to the following three statements: (1) ‘Asylum seekers jeopardize you and your family’s personal security’; (2) ‘Asylum seekers raise crime levels’; (3) ‘Asylum seekers jeopardize Israel’s/Denmark’s national security’. Response categories were from 1=not at all, to 7=strongly agree. The item correlations were high: from 0.69 to 0.83 for Denmark and from 0.56 to 0.65 for Israel (see Appendix 2). As both latent variables were highly correlated and could not be introduced into the model independently, they were used as two sub-dimensions for a more general second-order factor (Bollen, 1989) termed **THREAT**. Standardized factor loadings were higher than 0.89 in both countries (see Figure 1 below).

In keeping with the existing literature we controlled for respondents’ socio-demographic and individual attributes (see e.g. Esses et al., 2001; Scheepers et al., 2002): age (years), gender (male = 1, female = 0), religiosity (secular = 1, otherwise = 0), education level (years of schooling), and political orientation (right-wing = 1, other = 0). The means (with standard

deviations in parentheses) and percentages of these control variables are presented in Appendix 4.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Testing for measurement invariance*

The surveys in Israel and Denmark collected information for the same variables, but they do not guarantee that measurements are equivalent and comparable across countries. Instead, it is necessary to test for their measurement equivalence (i.e., invariance) before comparing coefficients of interest (e.g. regression coefficients or means) across countries (Davidov et al. 2014). This test can be applied for latent variables with two or more items. Accordingly we subjected the items for SOCIO-ECONOMIC THREAT, SECURITY THREAT, NO RIGHTS, and SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY to a measurement invariance test. This involved multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA: Bollen, 1989) with all factors simultaneously, before we conducted our comparative study.<sup>12</sup> The test results are presented in Appendix 5. They suggest that whereas configural and metric invariance were supported by the data, only partial (but not full) scalar invariance was supported as evinced in the global fit measures presented in Appendix 5 (Chen, 2007; Davidov et al., 2014). The equality constraints on the intercept of one item of THREAT (‘Asylum seekers take jobs away’) had to be removed based on the modification indices. We did not have to release any equality constraints on the intercepts of items measuring NO RIGHTS and SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY, suggesting that the measures of these two factors displayed full scalar invariance. The finding of full or partial scalar invariance is sufficient to allow a meaningful comparison of Israel and Denmark on both mean scores and coefficients of association (covariances, unstandardized regression coefficients) (Byrne et al., 1989).

## Findings

### *Descriptive Overview*

Table 2 displays means and standard deviations for the variables that measure NO RIGHTS, NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES, SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY, CONTACT, and THREAT in Denmark and Israel. The findings expose substantial differences between the two countries. As expected, Danish respondents displayed lower levels of rejection to grant rights than their Israeli counterparts ( $\bar{x}=4.0$  and  $\bar{x}=4.9$  respectively). When asked to evaluate the extent asylum seekers' claims as refugees were 'genuine' or legitimate, Danish and Israeli respondents were similarly ambivalent: the average score on this statement was again around the middle of the scale. Respondents' support for a humanitarian policy proved fairly modest in both countries, with stronger support in Denmark than in Israel ( $\bar{x}=4.1$  and  $\bar{x}=3.7$ , respectively).

Table 2 about here

Table 2 reveals a rather gloomy picture of natives' personal contacts with asylum seekers in both countries: on average, 37 percent and 26 percent of the Israeli and Danish respondents reported having no contact at all with asylum seekers. Respectively, 43 and 33 percent of the Israeli and Danish respondents reported social contact with asylum seekers, but they determined it as an unpleasant event. A relatively low percentage of respondents in both countries evaluated their contact with asylum seekers as a pleasant or positive experience (20 percent in Israel and 26 percent in Denmark). Finally, Israelis reported substantially higher levels than Danes for both security ( $\bar{x}=5.0$  and  $\bar{x}=3.5$ , respectively) and socio-economic threat ( $\bar{x}=4.9$  and  $\bar{x}=3.3$ , respectively).

Although interesting, the descriptive data do not tell us whether and to what extent perception of threat intervenes between individuals' socio-economic characteristics and their attitudes to asylum seekers. Such a model is estimated in the next section.

### *Multivariate Analysis*

#### *Estimating the Model*

We estimate for the Danish and Israeli samples a multi-group structural equation model [SEM] with latent variables, using the AMOS 23.0 software package (Arbuckle, 1995-2009) to examine our propositions. For this we use the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) procedure to deal with missing values (Schafer and Graham, 2002). To estimate the significance of indirect and total effect we use the bootstrap procedure (Arbuckle, 1995-2009). To test whether the effects of the explanatory variables differ by country we perform a chi square difference test for the difference between two regression coefficients (Byrne, 2013).

The model simultaneously estimates (1) the direct effects of the *exogenous* variables NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES, SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY, POSITIVE CONTACT and NEGATIVE CONTACT on the latent variables THREAT and NO RIGHTS, (2) the direct effects of THREAT on NO RIGHTS, and (3) the indirect (via THREAT) and total effects of the exogenous variables on NO RIGHTS (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 about here

Table 3 presents the unstandardized direct effects of our predictors on THREAT and the total and direct effects of the predictors on NO RIGHTS as well as the fit measures of the model. As the data demonstrate, the model provides a good fit to the data (Hu and Bentler, 1999).<sup>13</sup>

Table 3 about here

### *Explaining Perceptions of Threat*

The data in Table 3 (column 1) shows that in both countries perceptions of threat were higher in individuals who posit asylum seekers as ‘not genuine refugees’. As expected, the effect of this variable on threat was much stronger in Denmark than in Israel:  $b = 0.25$  and  $b = 0.14$ , respectively ( $p < 0.05$ )<sup>14</sup>.

Perceptions of threat were strongly affected by support for a humanitarian policy in the two countries. That is, the higher the level of support for such policies, the lower the level of perceived threat. Also in line with our theoretical expectations, the effect was found stronger in Denmark than in Israel:  $b = -0.30$  and  $-0.22$  respectively ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The two variables measuring social contact exerted different effects in the two countries: positive contact had a significant effect only in Israel but negative contact had a significant effect in both countries. Israelis who had 'a pleasant experience' with asylum seekers were less likely to convey feelings of threat ( $b = -0.41$ ). Respondents reporting 'not a pleasant experience' were more likely to express higher levels of threats both in Israel ( $b = 0.46$ ) and in Denmark ( $b = 0.19$ ).

### *Explaining Attitudes to Granting Rights to Asylum Seekers*

Table 3 (columns 2, 3 and 4) provides information on the direct, indirect and total effects of the explanatory variables on NO RIGHTS. The data show that the total effect of NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES on NO RIGHTS was not significant in both countries. Viewing asylum seekers as non-genuine refugees seems to only increase perceptions of threat but does not affect individuals' views on granting rights to asylum seekers overall. When we decompose the direct and indirect effects of NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES on NO RIGHTS, we detect a strikingly small and negative direct effect in Israel (but not in Denmark), suggesting that in Israel viewing



asylum seekers as not genuine slightly reduces the rejection of rights after controlling for the effect of threat. However, this direct effect is negligible in standardized terms (-0.07) and is only marginally significant.

Table 3 reveals that in both Denmark and Israel, support for a humanitarian policy decreased disagreement to grant rights to asylum seekers ( $b=-0.91$  and  $b=-0.53$  respectively, and as expected, the effect was stronger in Denmark ( $p < 0.05$ ). Positive contact decreases individuals' refusal to grant rights to asylum seekers in Israel but its effect was not significant in Denmark. By contrast, negative contact increases the tendency to refuse rights to asylum seekers in Denmark but not in Israel. In line with our theoretical expectations perception of threat *increases* unwillingness to grant rights to asylum seekers, and the effect of threat is stronger in Israel than in Denmark:  $b=0.61$  and  $b=0.30$  ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Finally, Table 3 provides information on the role of perceived threat as mediator. In Israel the effects of positive contact and support for a humanitarian policy on NO RIGHTS were partially mediated by perceptions of threat. By contrast, the effects of NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES and negative contact were fully mediated by perceptions of threat. In Denmark the effects of support for a humanitarian policy and negative contact on NO RIGHTS were partially mediated by perceptions of threat, while the effect of NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES on NO RIGHTS was fully mediated by perceptions of threat. That is, persons perceiving asylum seekers as not-genuine refugees felt stronger perceptions of threat and this made them less inclined to grant rights to asylum seekers. Though country differences were detected, overall these results support our expectations pertaining to the central role of perceptions of threat in explaining the ways the exogenous variables in the study affect attitudes to granting rights to asylum seekers.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

In this paper we contribute to the literature in the field by comparing public views on asylum seekers in Denmark and Israel. We focused on the role of support for humanitarian policy measures, perception of legitimacy of the asylum seekers' claims, social contact, and perceptions of threat on individuals' willingness to share their national benefits with those looking for refugee status in either country. Differences between the two countries in structural attributes led us to expect differences in the mean levels of support for granting rights to asylum seekers, but also differences in the strength of the operating mechanisms driving anti-immigrant sentiment. Several conclusions arise.

First, as expected, marked differences appeared between the two countries in average levels of disagreement with granting rights to asylum seekers. Danes reported rather moderate levels of threat and exclusionary attitudes; Israelis displayed much stronger feelings of threat and far higher levels of antagonism regarding asylum seekers. This difference between the two publics in terms of perceptions of threat and granting of rights taps into how both are in sync with general state policy, which is more inclusionary in Denmark than in Israel.

Secondly, the social mechanisms driving exclusionary attitudes to asylum seekers in the two countries are similar though not identical. Perception of legitimacy of asylum seekers' claims affected perceptions of threat in both countries, but much more in Denmark. Differentiation of types of asylum seekers is crucial in Danish society, which is more willing to help 'real' refugees—who are also perceived as less of a threat; in Israel negative sentiments and fears about any type of refugees are strong, and perception of threat tends to be high even for 'genuine' refugees. These sentiments of the Israeli public are in line with the government-led perception that Israel is essentially a 'temporary asylum state' (Kritzman and Kemp, 2008). In

sum, the effect of perceiving asylum seekers as non-genuine on willingness to grant rights was fully mediated by perceptions of threat in both countries.

Thirdly, the results suggest that support for humanitarian policy is critical for understanding attitudes to asylum seekers. The strong effect of this variable in both countries, but more especially in Denmark, tells us that citizens who hold that rich countries should have a high sense of responsibility for weak others are likely to be more tolerant about granting rights to asylum seekers. A universal trend is evident in attitudes to granting asylum seekers rights, as even in states like Israel with an exclusionary regime on non-ethnics, the psycho-social tendency to relate humanitarian values to care for the weak with willingness to grant access and rights to the country is apparent.

Fourthly, the results show that hostility to asylum seekers was affected by contact with asylum seekers but also by the quality of the contact. Positive contact was more important in reducing disagreement with granting rights to asylum seekers in Israel, whereas negative contact was an important factor in deepening this exclusionist attitude in Denmark. This is a curious finding that taps into the relation between the type of contact and the general public climate encompassing asylum seekers: in a negative public climate such as in Israel, individual positive contact stands out and affects public attitudes; in a positive public climate such as in Denmark, the negative views are more important in explaining public sentiment.<sup>15</sup> All in all, this provides empirical support to the validity of theories pertaining to the effect of repeated constructive encounters between groups on reducing the level of animosity, prejudice and hostility.

Fifthly, although in both countries perceptions of threat led to exclusionary attitudes to asylum seekers, as expected the effect of the threat perception was much stronger in Israel than in Denmark. We suggest that the stronger threat-attitudes mechanism in Israel taps into the two

countries' different contextual frameworks—relating, among other factors, to their migration and welfare regimes as well as to Israel's geopolitical situation. Citizens in comprehensive welfare states such as Denmark feel not only less threatened by the presence of asylum seekers, but such fears as there are may not translate so easily into exclusionary tendencies. One possible explanation is that (1) competition for socio-economic resources between natives and immigrants is weaker when welfare spending is high, and (2) values of solidarity and equality which are embedded in social institutions are expected to be internalized by the general public. Consequently, we expected natives' public positions on asylum seekers to be more inclusive in social-democratic welfare states than in less comprehensive welfare states even in the presence of threat.

The significantly higher effect of threat in Israel is also explicable in that both Jewish history (particularly the Holocaust) and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict have given rise to a 'siege mentality' (Bar-Tal, 2000) and a state of 'fearism' (Kalir, 2014) in the Jewish Israeli population. Accordingly, Jews in Israel tend to feel a constant existential threat emanating from the presence of out-group populations; this gives rise to hostile attitudes to non-Jewish populations (see Canetti-Nisim et al., 2008). This finding shows how the mechanism of determining an out-group's level of threat consists mostly of the *perceived* amount of national goods and not of the *actual* social benefits allocated in practice, as asylum seekers in Israel enjoy a minimal set of rights and are excluded from membership in any social schemes granted to the majority population or to ethnic minorities in the country. It seems that asylum seekers are perceived by the Israeli public as competitors in a zero-sum game.

Our study is not free of limitations. First, we focused only on two countries: Denmark and Israel. The two-country comparison allows in-depth examination of national contexts to

explain country differences in public views, but not a direct examination of how contextual variables such as immigration or welfare policies may affect individual attitudes to granting rights to asylum seekers. Though our focus on Denmark and Israel proved interesting and revealing, future studies may include additional countries in the analysis to better understand how contexts of reception explain differences in levels of disagreement with granting rights and its underlying mechanisms. Secondly, support for humanitarian policy measures was a major factor related to positive attitudes to asylum seekers. This however is a much broader concept theoretically, with many dimensions—more than the one operationalized in our study. Our data unfortunately included only two questions to measure it. The results underline the importance of enlarging the number of indicators measuring the concept, as well as the need to include it in future surveys on attitudes to immigrants in general and to asylum seekers and refugees in particular. Thirdly, we used cross-sectional data and could not test the direction of causality in the model empirically. We followed previous work to offer theoretical arguments to support our choices in the model. However, we do not exclude the possibility that some of the relations may run also in the opposite direction. Future studies employing panel data or factorial survey design may provide a systematic test for the direction of causality.

In sum, our findings suggest that despite significant differences between Denmark and Israel in their political, historical and geographical contexts, the mechanisms that explain exclusion of asylum seekers are fairly universal, but partly operate at different intensities in either country. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the tension between individuals' universal and particularistic attitudinal preferences is at play in the formation of public attitudes to asylum seekers. This provides an empirical test for the widely discussed repercussion of the phenomenon of forced migration, namely the tension between costs and responsibilities of host states

regarding asylum seekers. In times of mass movement of populations and increase in asylum seeking in Europe and elsewhere, we hope our findings may be of relevance for policy makers in endeavours to understand the sources of hostility towards asylum seekers and in attempts to reduce it.

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Table 1: Major demographic, socio-economic and political aspects - Israel and Denmark compared

Aspect	Israel	Denmark
<b>General</b>		
Immigration regime	Exclusive (rights based on ethno-national belonging)	Inclusive (rights based on residence and integration criteria)
Welfare regime	Semi-liberal (between liberal and conservative)	Social-democratic (universal benefits)
Economic indicators	Gini index <sup>1</sup> 42.8; GDP per capita: 35,905 USD <sup>2</sup>	Gini index <sup>3</sup> 29.0; GDP per capita: 53,104 USD <sup>4</sup>
Population (2016)	8,463,400 <sup>5</sup>	5,745,526 <sup>6</sup>
<b>Asylum-related issues</b>		
Beginning of the asylum phenomenon	2007	Post-World War II
Percentage of asylum seekers and refugees in the population	(0.5) <sup>7</sup>	(0.4)
Signatory to 1951 UN Convention Related to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol	Yes	Yes
Donations to UNHCR (2016, in USD) <sup>8</sup>	100,000 (rank 67)	55,538,063 (rank 10)
Legal status of asylum seekers	Temporary group protection status (UNHCR: 'People in a refugee-like situation')	Individual asylum request examined according to 1951 UN Convention and other local and international legal instruments
Access to RSD (Refugee Status Determination Process)	Limited	Vast, open
Right to work	Officially no	Yes, after 6 months

<sup>1</sup> For 2010. Scale ranging between 0 - 100. Higher scores indicate a higher inequality. Extracted from The World Bank, February 20, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>.

<sup>2</sup> For 2016. Extracted from The World Monetary Fund, February 20, 2017, <https://www.imf.org>.

<sup>3</sup> See note 1 above.

<sup>4</sup> See note 2 above.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Danmark Statistik data 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Includes only asylum seekers as of October 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Extracted from <http://www.unhcr.org/donors.html>, March 5, 2017.

Aspect	Israel	Denmark
EU pressure and guidelines relating to asylum	No	Yes (e.g., Dublin regulation; minimum standards)

Table 2

Means and standard deviations of NO RIGHTS, NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES, THREAT, SUPPORT FOR

A HUMANITARIAN POLICY and CONTACT

	Denmark	Israel
<b>NO RIGHTS (1-7, Disagreement = high score)</b>	<b>4.00 (1.7)</b>	<b>4.86 (1.7)</b>
People applying for refugee status should be allowed to work while their cases are considered	3.89 (2.2)	4.25 (2.4)
Granted refugees should be entitled to bring close family members to Denmark/Israel	4.10 (2.2)	5.21 (2.2)
Financial support should be given to refugee applicants while their cases are considered	3.77 (1.9)	5.12 (2.0)
<b>NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES (1-7, Not genuine = high score)</b>		
Most applicants for refugee status are not in real fear of		
persecution in their own countries	3.87 (2.0)	4.03 (2.2)
<b>THREAT (1-7, Threat = high score)</b>		
<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC THREAT</b>	<b>3.40 (1.6)</b>	<b>4.92 (1.6)</b>
Asylum seekers in Denmark/Israel are a burden on the welfare services provided to all residents	<b>3.32 (1.6)</b>	<b>4.88 (1.7)</b>
Asylum seekers are a burden on the education	4.45 (2.0)	5.74 (1.8)

services

Asylum seekers in Denmark/Israel take jobs away	3.36 (1.9)	4.91 (2.2)
from Danes/Israelis	2.78 (1.8)	4.57 (2.3)
Asylum seekers in Denmark/Israel lower the		
wage level of Danish/Israeli workers	2.91 (1.9)	4.32 (2.2)

## SECURITY THREAT

Asylum seekers in Denmark/Israel raise crime		
levels	<b>3.50 (1.8)</b>	<b>4.95 (1.8)</b>
Asylum seekers in Denmark/Israel are a threat to	4.50 (2.1)	5.77 (1.7)
personal and family safety	2.78 (1.9)	4.39 (2.4)
Asylum seekers in Denmark/Israel are a threat to		
national security	3.30 (2.0)	4.63 (2.3)

## SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN

### POLICY (1-7, High support = high score)

Richer countries have the responsibility to accept  
people from poorer countries

% Humanitarian	3.78 (2.1)	3.43 (2.2)
Richer countries should not deport asylum seekers		
arriving from countries defined as “dangerous” by		

the UNHCR	37.6	34.6
% Humanitarian	4.34 (2.1)	3.81 (2.2)
Average support for humanitarian policy measures		
	45.4	37.2
<b>Intergroup contact (%)</b>		
POSITIVE CONTACT	4.06 (1.9)	3.65 (1.9)
NEGATIVE CONTACT		
No contact		
	26.2	19.6
	33.2	42.6
	25.6	37.1
No answer		11.6

Table 3

Predicting NO RIGHTS and THREAT in Denmark and Israel in a multigroup SEM model  
(unstandardized coefficients, bootstrap standard errors in parentheses)

Variables	THREAT Direct effect		NO RIGHTS Direct effects		NO RIGHTS Indirect effects		NO RIGHTS Total effects	
	Denmark	Israel	Denmark	Israel	Denmark	Israel	Denmark	Israel
Male	-0.025 (0.090)	-0.252* (0.115)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.007 (0.029)	-0.153* (0.072)	-0.007 (0.029)	-0.153* (0.072)
Age	0.001 (0.003)	0.007 (0.004)	-0.016* (0.004)	-0.007 (0.005)	0.000 (0.001)	0.004 (0.003)	-0.015* (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)
Education	-0.006 (0.009)	-0.057* (0.022)	-0.006 (0.011)	-0.001 (0.022)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.035* (0.015)	-0.007 (0.012)	-0.036 (0.024)
Secular	-0.208* (0.090)	-0.369* (0.119)	-0.233* (0.115)	-0.105 (0.154)	-0.062* (0.034)	-0.224* (0.075)	-0.295* (0.119)	-0.329* (0.155)
Right	0.299* (0.122)	0.463* (0.123)	-0.028 (0.145)	0.243 (0.162)	0.088* (0.054)	0.282* (0.090)	0.060 (0.145)	0.525* (0.173)
POSITIVE CONTACT	0.049 (0.110)	-0.406* (0.160)	-0.085 (0.137)	-0.256 (0.186)	0.015 (0.035)	-0.247* (0.110)	-0.071 (0.148)	-0.503* (0.171)
NEGATIVE CONTACT	0.186** (0.099)	0.459* (0.127)	0.226 (0.128)	-0.044 (0.173)	0.055* (0.040)	0.279* (0.089)	0.281* (0.133)	0.235 (0.179)
NOT-GENUINE REFUGEES	0.252* (0.042)	0.141* (0.029)	-0.062 (0.047)	-0.068* (0.034)	0.074* (0.029)	0.086* (0.022)	0.012 (0.048)	0.018 (0.039)
SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY	-0.302* (0.066)	-0.220* (0.060)	-0.824* (0.089)	-0.398* (0.067)	-0.089* (0.034)	-0.134* (0.038)	-0.913* (0.081)	-0.532* (0.072)
THREAT	-	-	0.295* (0.101)	0.608* (0.089)	-	-	0.295* (0.101)	0.608* (0.089)

Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.06$ ; the bootstrap procedure was used to compute the standard errors for the total effects (Arbuckle, 1995-2009).

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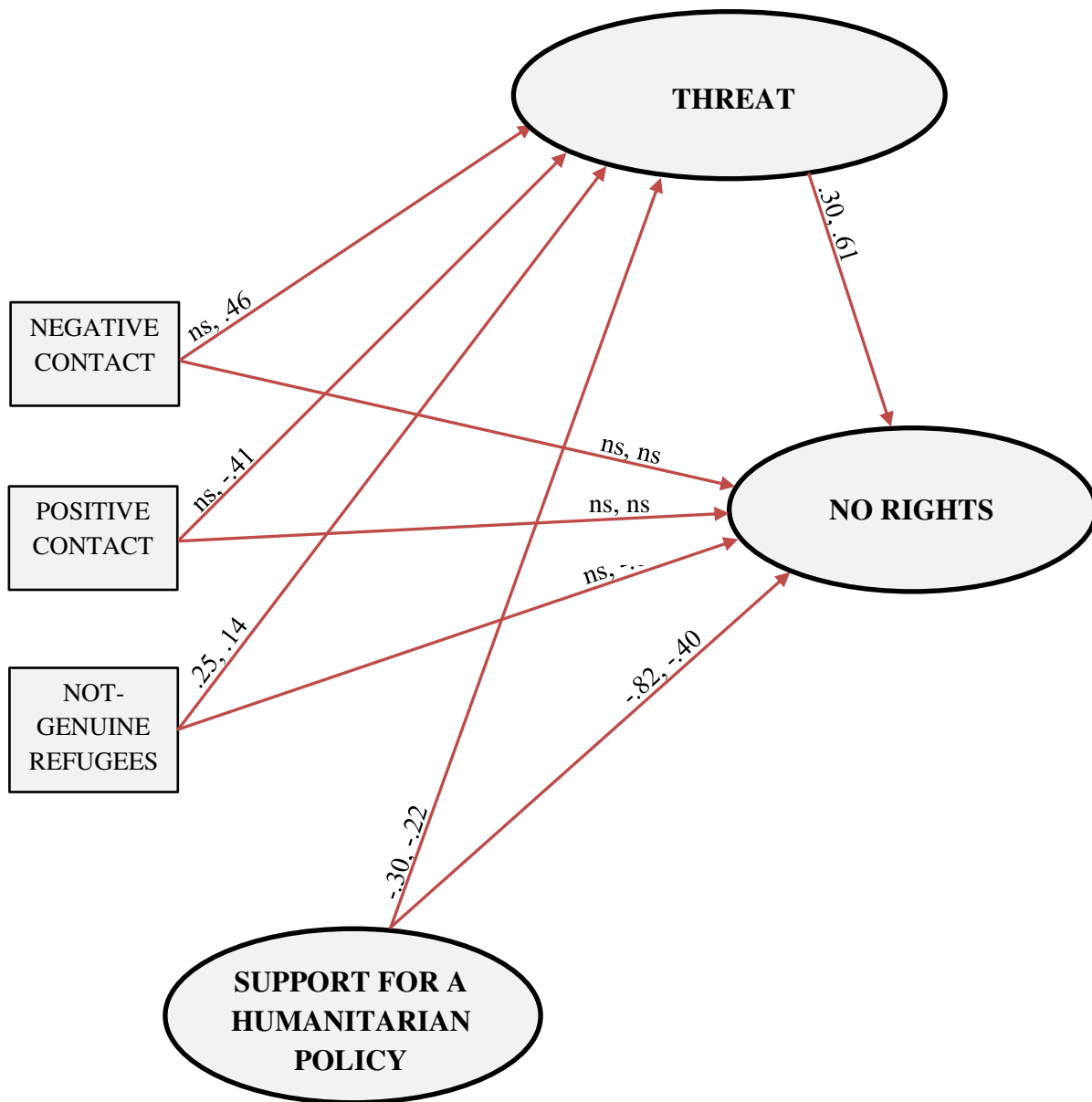
Global Fit measures:

Chi <sup>2</sup> /DF	2.032
CFI	0.968
RMSEA	0.032
P of Close Fit	1.000

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Figure 1: Full SEM model predicting perceptions of threat and disagreement to granting of rights in Denmark and in Israel (estimates: Denmark first, Israel second; ns=estimate not significant)



Appendix 1: Similarity of our sample and the population values in major individual-level characteristics, by country

	<b>Israel</b>		<b>Denmark</b>	
<b>Control Variable</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Years of schooling	14.0	15.2	13.1	14.3
Employed	74.0	77.0	71.3	67.0
Gender (percent men)	49.5	47.4	49.6	48.0
Secular	43	46.7	34.2	44.2
Religious	23	28.6	4.9	4.8
Left wing	19.0	15.8	48.0	41.2
Right wing	46.2	35.8	52.0	41.4
Center	19.3	13.8	-	-
Asia-Africa	25.2	32.4	-	-
Europe-America	35.2	40.2	-	-

Sources: The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics; Danmarks Statistik; we used proxies for the religiosity level and the years of schooling in Denmark relying on data from the European Social Survey Round 7 (2014).

Appendix 3: Standardized factor loadings of the latent variables' indicators

<b>Latent Variable</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Israel</b>	<b>Denmark</b>
NO RIGHTS	Right to work	.598	.736
NO RIGHTS	Right to financial support	.544	.697
NO RIGHTS	Right to family reunification	.592	.700
SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY	Rich countries should not deport asylum seekers	.711	.783
SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY	Rich countries should accept the poor	.793	.832
SOCIO-ECONOMIC THREAT	Burden on welfare services	.754	.745
SOCIO-ECONOMIC THREAT	Burden on education system	.780	.876
SOCIO-ECONOMIC THREAT	Take jobs	.692	.797
SOCIO-ECONOMIC THREAT	Lower wages	.687	.754
SECURITY THREAT	Raise crime levels	.811	.789
SECURITY THREAT	Threat to personal security	.705	.884
SECURITY THREAT	Threat to national security	.803	.937

## Appendix 4

### Denmark and Israel Samples Description

	Percent/Mean (SD)	Percent/Mean (SD)
	Denmark	Israel
<b>Gender</b>		
Percent Female	52.0	52.6
<b>Age</b> (in years)	48.4 (15.4)	47.1 (14.7)
<b>Education</b>		
Years of schooling	14.3 (5.8)	15.2 (3.0)
<b>Religiosity level</b>		
Not at all religious	44.2	46.7
Somewhat religious	51.0	24.7
Very religious	4.8	28.6
	51	

**Political orientation**

Right-wing	41.4	35.8
Left-wing	41.2	15.8
Center	-	13.8
No report	17.4	34.6
<b>N</b>	500	500

Source: own data

## Appendix 5

Global fit measures for a measurement invariance test of NO RIGHTS, THREAT and SUPPORT  
FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY

	Chi square	Degrees of freedom	CFI	RMSEA
Configural	216.280	78	.976	.042
Metric	269.386	86	.969	.046
Full Scalar	557.766	94	.921	.070
Partial Scalar	331.801	89	.959	.052

CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Denmark's EU opt-out, one of its conditions for signing the Maastricht Treaty, allows it to determine its own policy on asylum and immigration. Nevertheless, being an EU member-state, it is more restricted by international and EU standards than Israel in its freedom to decide whether and to what extent to admit asylum-seekers and grant them refugee status.

<sup>2</sup> Empirically, only scant research addressed citizens' attitudes to asylum seekers in both countries (for an exception see Hochman, 2015 for the Israeli case). A handful of studies on Danes' attitudes to immigrants focused on the general category of migrants (e.g. Muslim versus non-Muslim) but not specifically on asylum seekers (Enoch, 1994; Mouritsen and Olsen, 2013; Togeby, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Though these numbers are dramatically high for Denmark, they are relatively low compared with the numbers arriving in 2015 to neighboring Sweden (156,400) and Germany (441,900) (UNHCR, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> We do not claim that Denmark represents a fully inclusive migration model, but on the continuum between exclusive-inclusive, and relative to Israel, its regime is designed to incorporate and include foreigners within its societal borders.

<sup>5</sup> We follow previous research in which social contact is used as a predictor (rather than a consequence) of exclusionary attitudes (McLaren, 2003; Wagner et al., 2003).

<sup>6</sup> We are aware that some of the paths may also operate in the other direction. For example, perceptions of threat and attitudes to a particular policy may influence patterns of social contact. However, with cross-sectional data there is no way to test this issue systematically. Therefore, our model follows models suggested in mainstream literature on exclusionary attitudes to immigrants in which our explanatory variables have been identified as determinants of

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exclusionary attitudes (see e.g. Scheepers et al. 2002; McLaren 2003).

<sup>7</sup> In contrast to support for humanitarian policies and legitimacy of claims, we do not have specific hypotheses regarding differential country effects of social contact on threat and rights.

<sup>8</sup> Some of the items in the survey were adopted from the European Social Survey round of 2002/3 which collected data on attitudes to asylum seekers. Unfortunately, the last round of the ESS (2014) included only one question measuring attitudes to asylum seekers. Therefore, we had to collect a unique data set containing items measuring attitudes to and opinions about asylum seekers (which were not included in the 2014 ESS round) to allow responses to our research questions in both countries in detail.

<sup>9</sup> The web panel was participants in previous nationally representative telephone surveys conducted by Voxmeter. We were fully aware that using different modes of data collection in the two countries was not optimal and could affect the results. We employed a well-known surveying company in Denmark which assured us that it strove to reach national representativeness and provide a sample of high quality. In addition, we conducted measurement-invariance tests to ensure that the measurements were comparable across the Denmark and Israel. While these may not solve the problem of using different modes, they may ease them.

<sup>10</sup> The two factors SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY and NO RIGHTS measured two related but different concepts. To evaluate whether the items tapped into a single factor, we estimated a single factor measured by the three indicators of NO RIGHTS and the two indicators of SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY. This model had a considerably worse fit than the model with the two separate factors. The output for these two models is available from the first author upon request. Also, the correlations of the items measuring the



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same latent variable were higher than their correlation with the items measuring the other latent variable (see Appendix 2). As well as empirical considerations, face validity also supported our decision to consider them two separate latent variables: Whereas the items measuring NO RIGHTS referred to specific rights that should or should not be granted to asylum seekers, the items measuring SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY were more general and referred to overall support of state policies accepting asylum seekers in rich countries.

<sup>11</sup> In preliminary analyses we included additional control variables such as income, employment status, occupation (academic-professional-managerial jobs, white collar jobs, blue-collar jobs), and marital status. These variables had no significant effect on any of the variables in the model in both countries. Therefore, and for the sake of parsimony, we excluded them from further analysis. This did not change any of our substantive conclusions.

<sup>12</sup> We began the analysis by modeling each latent variable alone in each sample, with the exception of SUPPORT FOR A HUMANITARIAN POLICY because this latent variable includes only two items, and a measurement model with one latent variable and two items will not be identified. However, a simultaneous test of all factors is necessary to be able to test for convergent and discriminant validity and exclude the possibility of cross-loadings between latent variables and items measuring other latent variables (see Davidov et al., 2008; Davidov et al., 2014).

<sup>13</sup> Because we conducted a multi-group comparison analysis we relied on the unstandardized regression coefficients for the comparison (Bollen, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> The  $p$  coefficient in this test and in the tests below are based on a chi-square difference test between a model that constrains an effect to be equal in Denmark and Israel and a model which allows this effect to vary across the two countries. A significant  $p$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) implies that

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constraining the effect to be equal across countries results in a significant deterioration in model fit in terms of the chi square. Such a result implies that in a final model the effects should be allowed to *differ* across countries, because such a model, where the effects are different, reflects the data better (see Bollen 1989, pp. 291-292).

<sup>15</sup> We thank one of the reviewers for this insightful explanation.